1: Kruger M-5 (ca. 1930)1936 FX14 Lovedu FX14

5. The Lovedu asked them how they managed to live without fire. The Kheoga said: "What is fire? what does it do?" The Lovedu said: "We warm ourselves by the fire and cook the food with it." Then they gave them cooked food. When they had eaten they found that it tasted sweet. So they asked the Lovedu for fire. They wanted to cook with it and to warm themselves. When it went out they returned again to ask for fire. Then they began to work with it.

6. Now the Lovedu desired the country and its wealth. They wanted to take possession of it. But they were unable (to do so), as they found that it had its possessors. So they planned to fight and to drive the Kheoga out of the country.

7. Now they thought that their weapons could be the fire. So they ordered the young men to seize fire-brands. They surrounded the villages of the Kheoga to set fire to the country that the fire might burn the villages together with the people. The young men did so. The fire burnt everywhere and laid the villages in ashes. The Kheoga were in great distress. They left their villages and fled. But there was no spot for them to get away, for the fire surrounded the whole country.

8. Some ascended the hills, they were protected by the large rocks, where the fire could not come. Others climbed upon trees. These burnt altogether, for the grass was very tall, for it had not been burned since the beginning. Many people died a terrible death. Only very few escaped. Even to-day these people have not yet become a tribe again. Their kin has not yet increased similar to others.[16]

9. So the country became property of the Lovedu until to-day. The Lovedu gained their country by fighting for it with fire.

10. Furthermore they say that on their journey from Mashonaland the Lovedu were in great troubles, when they found a dried-up country —a country without water. The large rivers were far from them. They were looking for much water and did not find it. It is said that their chief chose young men to look for water for the tribe. He himself went with them. They were searching but they missed it.

11. They say that the chief had taken with him the calabash which his father had given him to produce rain. So he tried to make the rain fall where they were. After a little while there fell a heavy rain and filled all the rivers and watercourses. When they returned to their shelters, they arrived wet to the skin. The people got water for drinking and cook-

[16] They have inter-married with the Lovedu and other tribes.

1: Kruger M-5 (ca. 1930)1936 FX14 Lovedu FX14

ing. It is said that this was the first miracle of that chief, for in Mashonaland his brother had produced the rainfall.

12. The name of the first chief who left Mashonaland is Magaphele. It was he who took possession of the country of Kheoga by fighting with fire. The second chief is Mohale. There is not much known about him.

13. The third chief is "Kheale kha Mmamohhale a Leḍaža."[17] This is his praise-name. He produced rainfall just like his fore-fathers.

14. The fourth chief is "Phedola-Khefhedola-Maru-a—ḍaža."[18] This is his praise-name. They praise them on account of the clouds, they say: "They transform the clouds so that the rain must fall."

15. He—Phedola—had a son who was the first-born[19] When the king was about to die, he gave the younger son the rain-horn. But the people did not know that the chief had given him the horn of chieftainship. They thought that they would find that he who had the great name of chieftainship[20] would be he who had received the rain-horn. The name of the eldest son was "Maḍaže" (the Filler) that of the younger one was Makhoba (the Finisher). Therefore they said: "Chief is Maḍaže! He will fill the rivers with rain-water. As to Makhoba that means he will empty the rivers, so that we shall have no water." Therefore they proclaimed Maḍaže their chief.

16. They drove the younger brother away so that he had to leave the Lovedu-country. He left together with the troop which trusted in him. He went upwards and came to "Nareni"[21] and settled on the mountain of Khevela.[22]

17. Now in Loveduland Maḍaže was not able to produce rainfall. That country was a country of sunshine and hunger without intermission. There at Khevela rain was falling continuously every year; it was a country of corn, for the rain was falling.

18. Then the head-men of Loveduland began to cry and to complain that they did not know that it was Makhoba who had been given the rain-

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[17] Unknown names

[18] "Transformer—clouds are filled."

[19] —and therefore heir to the Crown according to the law.

[20] See [19]

[21] "At the Buffalo" name of the country in the South of Loveduland from the name of the tribes living there. They praise the buffalo.

[22] Near the confluence of the Selati-and Olifant-river.

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
FX14 Lovedu FX14

say, equally divided between the ancestors and the rain queen. And it is she also who controls, in the interest of social well-being, that half of the cosmic order upon which men's life and happiness are conceived most vitally to depend. This dependence upon her and the moral imperatives of the kinship obligations between her and her subjects are the main factors conditioning the Lovedu outlook upon the world and upon society. Their ritual ideology, linking the queen's mystical powers to the welfare of society, expresses their most important conceptions of the ordering of the natural world; their kinship ideology, incorporated into the political system and converting political into moral obligations, provides the main principles governing men's relations to one another. Agreement and mutual adjustment between individuals become ultimate values which have an overriding validity in determining the rights and duties of man to man. The Lovedu political pattern follows that of the centralized states of the South Bantu; yet it is not force but reciprocity, not administrative machinery but ties of sentiment, not inflexible rules but agreement, that are the great principles of social and political obligation.

643 772 182 [642]

Myths and Origins

The Lovedu are not given to speculation about first beginnings or final causes. There is no world-dawn or far-off mythical event when the order of nature and of society was irrevocably instituted. There is not even a sky-god to account for lightning and thunder or to furnish men with an explanation of stellar phenomena, such as the movement of heavenly bodies. Some of the larger stars are named, for example the Pleiades which are associated with hoeing time, but the association seems to be a vestige diffused from another culture and has no real significance, whether pragmatic or mystical. A vague, hardly ever invoked myth attributes the creation of the world and man to *Khuzwane* who left his footprints on certain rocks in the north when they were still new and soft. But the act of creation, like *Khuzwane* himself, is too remote, too unrelated to present realities, to be of any concern to men; and they find no place in, nor do they in any way influence, the Lovedu philosophy of the cosmos or of society. The Lovedu apparently feel the need to posit a first or final cause, but such a cause has not continued to operate as a force. An inexplicable affliction such as sterility appears sometimes to be attributed to *Mudimo*, the creator-god of the Sotho, who, according to Lovedu thought, is identical with *Khuzwane*; but *Mudimo* in this context is to be equated with a conditional destiny, and thus does not imply belief in fatalism since the course of events can be deflected by man-made medicines. Nor is there any supplication of the creator, for the Lovedu do not conceive of any link between their ancestor spirits and the creator: *Khuzwane* cannot be approached through the ancestors.

773 ● [821] 773 776 [842]

Thus origins of the cosmic order and wonders of celestial phenomena do not exercise the Lovedu mind. When Simeon, a close relative of the queen, whom we had interested in these things, asked the old men about them,

772 821

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
FX14 Lovedu FX14

they deprecated his lack of practical sense and wondered whether he was losing his reason. What is significant to the Lovedu is not the origin but the maintenance of the order of nature. Interest in the continuity of natural forces centres, however, not on an abstract system, but on the benefit of man or rather of the Lovedu people. Among these forces the most important are those governing the auspicious movements of clouds and their transformation into rain. But they stand in no relation to the forces that brought the world into existence. Among Lovedu, in contrast for example to Oceanian peoples, there is consequently complete discontinuity between mythological origins, or the forces that operated at the dawn of the world, and present realities or the forces maintaining the existing order. Even the ancestor gods do not bridge this gap, and man's dependence upon them—and hence the force of religious sanctions—derives not from their relationship to the beginnings of things but from kinship principles.

Myths play an insignificant part in Lovedu life. Almost the only myths are legends of the institution of the present political order which give a generalized account of the migration of the royal nuclear group from Rhodesia and of the reigns of the various chiefs. There is no attempt in them to intensify the beliefs or validate the institutional arrangements underlying the sacred kingship. It is not these myths that give warranty to the queen's mystical credentials and to the complex of customs that supports them. Indeed today scant credence is accorded by the younger men to the legendary royal ancestry which traces the descent of the nuclear group to the Karanga of Monomotapa in Southern Rhodesia, for the Lovedu find it difficult to believe that they are related to a people who now appear to them to be inferior, lacking the prestige and aristocratic pretensions of their reputed ancestors. In one version of the myth the Lovedu broke away from Monomotapa under the younger 'chosen' son to whom the previous chief had given the rain-charms. He fled south as a result of his conflict with the eldest brother who had legal precedence. In another, it is a daughter who, having committed incest with her brother, escapes with the rain-charms and her infant son from her outraged father.

The legends are further concerned to explain the settlement of the Lovedu in their present environment: their choice was determined by the absence of red earth which would soil their loincloths and the abundance of *murula* trees and mounds of edible termites, both of which are valued and ritually significant items in their diet. A later dissension between two claimants to the throne is presented as a conflict between chief son and chosen son, and again the victory of the chosen son vindicates the divine right of the rain-maker against legal precedence, and in that way appears to justify the present flexible system of succession as against the challenge of the Northern Sotho emphasis on primogeniture and certainty. Just as the title to becoming ruler of a new tribe is in one version validated by the incest of brother and sister, so the later and equally momentous change from kings to queens is brought into relation with father-daughter incest.

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
FX14 Lovedu FX14

But the whole cycle of myths merely emphasizes in very general terms the importance of rain-making as a prerequisite of the claim to chieftainship and for the well-being of the tribe; it does not concern itself with justifying the validity of the various institutional arrangements that are the main support of the beliefs and values of the queen's mystical credentials.

Conception of the Natural Order

The Lovedu do not oppose man and nature. There are no explicit formulations of the nature of the universe, but a natural order inexorably going its ordained way is implicitly rejected in their conceptions. The assumption is that cosmic forces are controllable and, in fact, controlled at every turn by man for his own benefit. Since nature is of interest and importance only so far as it is or can be used by society, there is no such conception as a world order unrelated to man's activities and desires. The order of nature is a controlled one. There are various ways in which man is able to use and control powers in nature—by *vuŋaga* (the evil aspect of which is *vulɔi*), i.e. by the use of power concentrated in certain persons and objects; by appeal to the ancestor-gods upon whom are projected the powers that the child experiences in relation to its parents; through the mysteries of the *diŋoma* which are associated with initiation and the fertility cult; and through the divinity of the queen whose concern it is to control nature in the interests of the tribe as a whole. This idea of the control of nature by the chief on behalf of the tribe is not unique; it is common among the Bantu tribes of South Africa. But the Lovedu emphasis is on the divine origin and special affinity with nature of the queen herself, whereas in tribes such as the Zulu and Tsonga, where the mystical relation of the chief to his people and his powers over nature have to be achieved by magical strengthening on his accession and to be renewed periodically, it is largely by means of the magic of the royal regalia that the chief is able to exercise control. Among all, including Lovedu, one of the most important factors in the powers and position of the chief is the fact that he is the living representative of the long line of royal ancestors (tribal gods). There is considerable overlapping of these four categories among the Lovedu. Thus ancestors are kept satisfied and happy by a charm placed in their shrine; the queen controls rain not only through her divinity but also by means of medicines and charms and appeals to her ancestors who can prevent her from making rain. Let us consider these means for the control of nature in greater detail.

Vuŋaga (skilled use of power concentrated in persons and objects)

The forces of nature may be manipulated through properties intrinsic in various objects, animate and inanimate. The substances in which these attributes or powers (*maaḍa*) reside are mainly *melimo* (medicines) or *mere* (plants). But the term medicines in this context has a wider connotation than the parallel term among us; it includes both medicine and magic, and is a medico-magical conceptual category which to the Lovedu is quite distinct